



The Journal

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May 25, 2017

USU Celebrates 38th Commencement



Photo by Sharon Holland



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Remember Safety during 101 Critical Days of Summer

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer for many and is a reminder to review the guidelines in the "101 Critical Days of Summer" annual Navy wide campaign.

"From Memorial Day through Labor Day, many of us will face increased exposure to hazards at home and on the job," Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis wrote in a safety memo. "Warm weather and longer days combine for greater opportunities to travel, play sports and enjoy recreational activities of every kind. As leaders we must prepare ourselves and engage our people to ensure we exercise sound judgment and focused leadership to lessen the vulnerability of our uniformed and civilian workforce to unique summertime hazards. One loss is too many. The preservation of our force is a national security imperative."

In summer 2016, the Naval Safety Office reported 19 Sailors and Marines died – 17 from traffic accidents and two during recreational activities.

Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Safety Manager Phil Phillips encourages people go over these safety tips before going out on summer activities.

BEACH SAFETY

- Hit the beach early and later in the afternoon; protect your skin – limit amount of direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Wear sunglasses and foot protection
- Don't dive headfirst into any unknown or shallow water
- Avoid jumping from cliffs, piers, jetties or bridges
- Stay clear of boats
- Swim parallel to shore

BICYCLING

- Make sure brakes and cables work correctly
- Tighten the saddle and handlebar grips
- Obey traffic signals when riding in streets
- Make eye contact with drivers, pedestrians and other cyclists



BOAT SAFETY

- Don't overload your boat
- Keep a good lookout and situational awareness of other boats and objects
- Operate at safe and legal speeds

DRIVING

- Don't drink and drive; call a cab or use ride-sharing application
- Reduce in-vehicle distractions
- All Sailors and Marines must complete the Basic Rider Course to ride a motorcycle

HEAT ILLNESS

- Recognize symptoms of heat stroke such as hot, red and dry skin; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing
- Heat exhaustion symptoms are cool, pale skin; heavy sweating; headache, nausea or vomiting and dizziness
- Wear lightweight, light colored clothing; drink water, eat small meals and take regular breaks

HYDRATION

- Drink water or sports drink after exercising or most physical activity
- Start drinking water an hour or two before starting physical activity during high heat

SUNBURN

- Use sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor of at least 15
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours
- If possible, stay in the shade

For more information, visit the Naval Safety Center website at go.usa.gov/xNkYX.

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Bethesda Notebook

Flag/GO, Senior Enlisted Leadership Panel

All are welcomed to attend a Flag/GO and Senior Enlisted Leadership Panel on June 1 at 2 p.m. in Memorial Auditorium. Panel members will discuss and answer questions concerning mentoring, leadership development and career progression. Scheduled panel members include Maj. Gen. Dorothy Hogg, Rear Adm. Colin Chinn, Rear Adm. David Lane, Brig. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, Rear Adm. Joan Hunter, retired Sergeant Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston and retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Joe Campa. Lane and the Junior Officer Council at Walter Reed Bethesda are sponsoring the event.

Pre-retirement Seminars

Two-day pre-retirement seminars, open to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's Department of Defense GS employees planning to retire within the next five years, are scheduled for June 6-7, July 26-27, and Aug. 22-23. Pre-registration is required. Registration forms are available on the National Capital Region, Medical Directorate MD website: <http://www.capmed.mil/>, and on the WRNMMC and Fort Belvoir Community Hospital banners. For more information, contact dha.bethesda.wrnmmc.list.preretirement-seminar@mail.mil.

Master Clinician Recognition

Walter Reed Bethesda's Master Clinician Recognition Program will be June 16 at noon in Memorial Auditorium. All staff members are invited. The program recognizes the medical center's master and associate master clinicians.

Fleet, Family Support Center

The Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) on Naval Support Activity Bethesda offers programs intended to assist service members and their families with military life. FFSC's workshops and seminars include: job search strategies for military spouses; federal resume writing; time management; credit management; consumer financial awareness; interview skills; pre-deployment briefings; return and reunion briefings; and more. For more information, call 301-319-4087, or visit FFSC in Building 11, first floor.

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PHOTOS BY SHARON HOLLAND

More than 330 uniformed professionals received their medical, graduate nursing, dental and biomedical science, public health and clinical psychology degrees on May 20, during the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences 38th commencement at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

More than 330 Graduate During USU's 38th Commencement

By Sarah Marshall
USU External Affairs

During a ceremony steeped in tradition, more than 330 uniformed professionals received their long-deserved medical, graduate nursing, dental and biomedical science, public health and clinical psychology degrees on May 20 – Armed Forces Day – at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) 38th commencement exercise at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

Graduates in uniform were active duty officers in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force or Public Health Service, and after walking across the stage in their academic regalia, they received their diplomas and left the stage, before changing back into their military uniforms – making for a unique ceremony. Graduating medical students returned to recite their respective service commissioning oath, led individually by each Surgeon General. They were then promoted to their next rank.

Commencement speaker Dr. Ronald R. Blanck, chair of USU's Board of Regents and former Army Surgeon General, explained that USU is unique – not because of its great education, research, or patient care delivered by faculty and students, but because of the synergy between



From left to right: U.S. Public Health Surgeon General Rear Admiral Sylvia Trent-Adams, U.S. Air Force Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Mark Ediger, U.S. Navy Surgeon General Vice Admiral Forrest Faison, and U.S. Army Surgeon General Nadja West. During the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences commencement exercise on May 20, graduating medical students recited their respective service commissioning oath, led individually by each of the Surgeon Generals.

two professions – health care and the military, he said. They share the same values of integrity, courage, commitment and leadership, he said, and especially, service.

“Service is at the core of health care, and at the core of the military – others before self,” Blanck said, speaking from 32 years of experience in the military.

He told the graduates, including

public health service and civilian graduates, that health care, the military, and family, are all equally important.

“You’ve chosen fields of service, in health care and in the military – service to your professions, service to your patients, service to those you lead, service to your colleagues,” Blanck said. And it’s important to find a balance between those competing

demands – being aware of those demands is the first step in achieving that balance, he said.

He went on to impart several words of advice.

“Always listen ... be decisive, but never thoughtlessly. Be visible ... people will behave the way you do, so set that example. Remember that if you avoid a decision, you’re actually making a decision not to act, so decisiveness is part of that,” he said. Health care today is much more of a team sport, he added, so value what team members bring to the table.

“Refer, discuss, communicate ... and always keep that patient in the center of what you’re doing with your teammates.” He concluded, “At the end of the day, realize we’re very fortunate — we all are — in taking care of the best patients in the world. The men and women of the uniformed services, active, guard, reserve, retirees, and their families. What a privilege it is.”

Among the graduates were 159 Doctor of Medicine degrees, 34 master's degrees, 15 Doctor of Philosophy degrees, and two Doctor of Public Health degrees, from USU's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine. USU's Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing conferred 55 Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees and three Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science degrees, and USU's Postgraduate Dental College conferred 69 Master of Science in Oral Biology degrees.

Organ Recipients Share Stories, Thank Donors, Call For More Donors

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Command Communications

Douglas Jordan still tears up when he explains the circumstances that led to his first organ transplants in September 2013. He shared his story, as did other organ recipients, April 26 during the Organ Transplant Fair held in the America Building at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Wendy Caesar-Gibbs, a registered dietitian and board-certified specializing in renal nutrition, helped plan and organize the fair "to bring awareness to the importance of being an organ donor, and showcasing some of our transplant recipients." She said organ donation extends not only life, but the quality of life the patient can have.

"There are approximately 80,000 people waiting for kidneys in the United States. Patients wait for a deceased donor kidney for five years or more, depending on blood type and region. Increasing the living donor pool would help lessen the wait time and give people a better quality of life," added Dr. Angela Curry, a clinical transplant pharmacist at WRNMMC who also helped organized the fair.

As part of WRB's holistic transplant team, Caesar-Gibbs and Curry agreed that one of the rewards of what they do is seeing how their patients progress following a transplant.

"It's rewarding to see your patients get a new lease on life and to see them thrive in their activities that they may not have been able to enjoy or do," Curry stated.

"There is no greater reward than that," added Caesar-Gibbs. "It is then that you fully embrace the fact that what you do matters."

And matter it does to Jordan, who, along with other organ recipients at the transplant fair, sported shirts with the message, "Have A Heart, It Matters."

"It's still hard for me to tell my story," said Jordan, who also goes by the nickname DJ. "I'm a recipient of a liver and two kidneys."

The retired Air Force master sergeant explained he found out in 2011 that his liver failure was failing. He was then placed on the waiting list to receive a transplant.

Fast forward a couple of years to Sept. 11, 2013 with his liver still in decline, Jordan left his office in Washington, D.C. to go to a business meeting, which lasted for about 30 minutes. Three hours later, he was in Richmond,



COURTESY PHOTO

From left, Dr. Angela Curry, Wendy Caesar-Gibbs, Douglas Jordan, Vicki Pitts and Debra Washington participate in the Organ Transplant Fair held in the America Building at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on April 26.

Virginia, not knowing how he got there or why he was there.

"My car had run out of gas, and I had abandoned it on the highway," Jordan said. "I later found out I had walked around in Richmond for two days and two nights. I didn't know who I was and I didn't know where I was," he added.

"I had developed hepatic encephalopathy (HE)," he explained. "This is when your liver fails because it's not able to filter the chemicals in your body, so ammonia enzymes had gone from my liver to my brain causing instant memory loss."

Jordan said as he wandered the streets of Richmond, even going into some of its hardest areas, he felt people didn't assist him or bothered him because they probably felt he was homeless and destitute. He added that during those two days the only thing he recalled eating was chalk he had purchased from a store he had drifted in.

He said a Silver Alert was issued throughout D.C., Maryland and Virginia for him.

"On Friday, Sept. 13, 2013, two paramedics found me in a parking lot in Richmond," Jordan said. "They had gone into a sandwich shop, and the Silver Alert came on a television in the store."

Jordan said as he was getting into the ambulance, he felt his back pocket and discovered he still had his wallet. "My military ID was in it. I pulled it out and handed it to the paramedics and said, 'I think this is me.'" He then passed out.

"The next thing I knew when I woke up, my sister was standing over me at the hospital in Richmond, but I didn't even know who she was, or my brother, who was also there," Jordan continued. "It was determined I had walked 13 miles in those two days, just wandering the streets of Richmond, not knowing who I was or where I was."

A native of Dayton, Ohio and owner of a food service business in D.C., Jordan explained he was rushed from the Richmond hospital's emergency room to the transplant center at the University of Maryland in Baltimore, where he was on the list for the liver transplant.

Jordan underwent a liver and kidney transplant at the University of Maryland, but the transplanted kidney began to fail and he went on the waiting list for another one.

"My brother came forth to donate his kidney, but he was not a match," said Jordan wiping tears from his eyes with a tissue. "We went into the swap program, which meant he would donate one of his kidneys to someone

who he is a match with so I could get a kidney from someone who matched me.

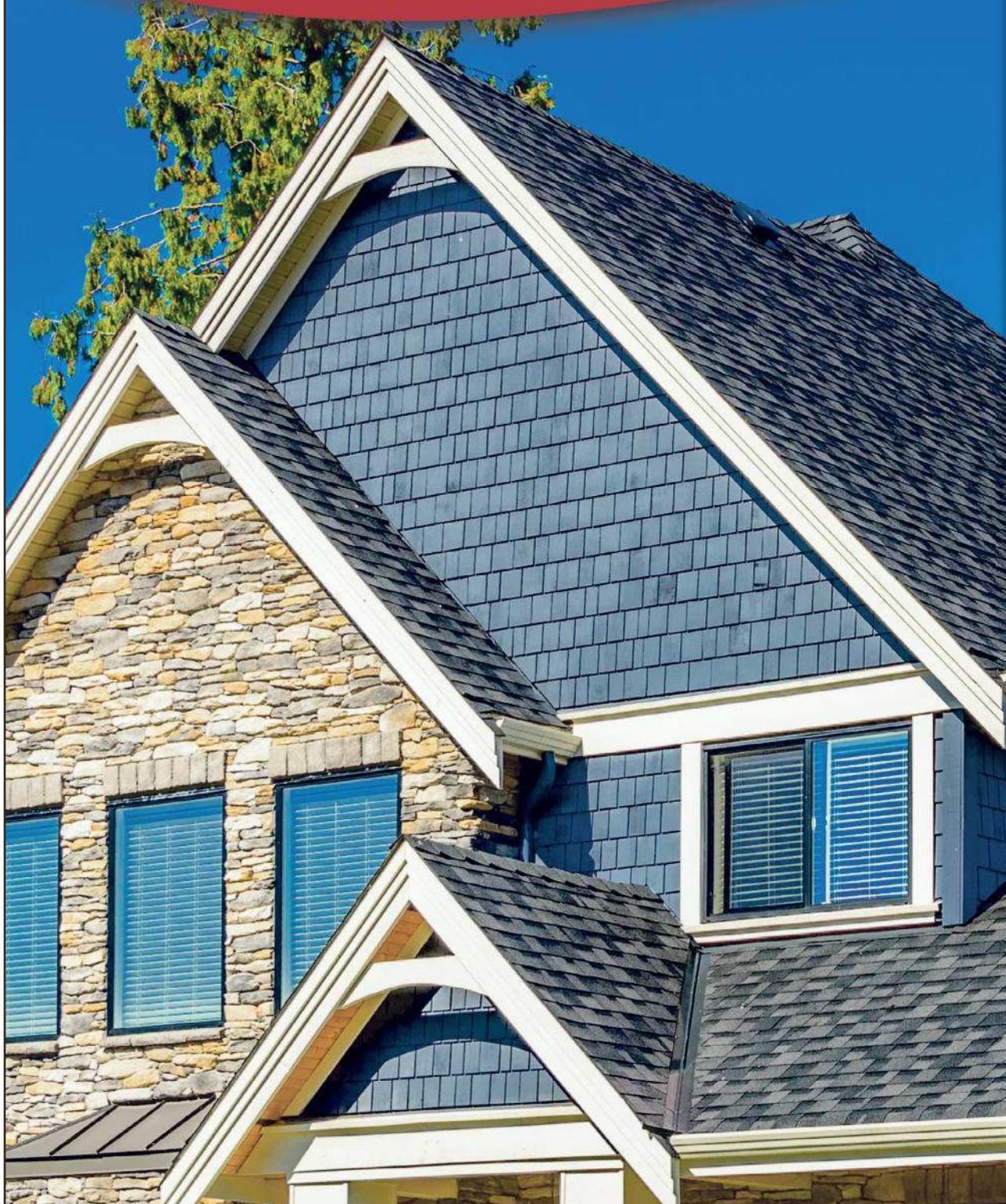
"I still ask myself to this day, 'How could someone be that giving,'" Jordan added. "[My brother] donated his kidney to a complete stranger, and a complete stranger gave of themselves to me, so that I could have a better life," he said, again wiping away tears.

Almost a year to the day of his first transplants, Jordan had his second kidney transplant, this one performed at Walter Reed Bethesda, in September 2014. WRNMMC's Organ Transplant Service only does kidney transplants because of its size

The Organ Transplant Service at Walter Reed Bethesda is the only transplant center in the Military Health System and is in the top tier of all U.S. transplant programs, according to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR), a regulatory body that tracks transplant program outcomes.

When asked how he is now doing, Jordan responded with a radiant smile, "I am wonderful. It's been a journey, but I feel it's a journey that I needed to take to teach me a lot, not only about myself, but about other people as well.

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NSAB, Walter Reed Bethesda Participate in Bike To Work Day



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Army 1st Lt. Neil Jayakar, a nurse who works in Cardiac Telemetry at Walter Reed Bethesda, explained he participated in Bike to Work Day on May 19 "to see if it was feasible to do it on a more regular basis. In addition to being better for the environments, it's also an easy workout to complete," he said.

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Command Communications

Citing an easier commute and no worries with parking on base, in addition to health and environmental reasons, a number of people who work at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and other tenants on Naval Support Activity Bethesda, biked to work May 19 for the annual Bike to Work Day.

NSAB Commanding Officer Navy Capt. Marvin L. Jones, Transportation Program Manager Ryan Emery and representatives from Morale, Welfare and Recreation as well as the Naval Medical Research Center, welcomed cyclists on base with water, fruit, energy bars, T-shirts and health information. The base served as one of the pit stops for the Bethesda's Bike the Pike celebration of Bike to Work Day.

Although a number of WRNMMC, NSAB and tenant organizations' staff members who biked to work May 19 didn't register for the event or make a stop at the base location, Emery said exactly 100 riders did make a pit stop at their station. He added the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments oversees organizing the official pit stops for Bike to Work Day in the region.

"We have been hosting a pit stop for at least nine years," Emery said of the NSAB MWR participation. "Last year, the U.S. Navy won an award for one of the largest employers participating in the event, and we received the award."



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Bicyclists make a pit stop at the station located on Naval Support Activity Bethesda on May 19 during Bike to Work Day.

Army 1st Lt. Neil Jayakar, a nurse who works in Cardiac Telemetry at Walter Reed Bethesda, explained he participated in Bike to Work Day "to see if it was feasible to do it on a more regular basis. In addition to being better for the environments, it's also an easy workout to complete," he added.

"I live nearby and it's a gorgeous day," said Navy Cmdr. Virginia Blackman, an assistant professor in the School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University on NSAB. She added she bikes to work every day because of base parking challenges.

"It's also important for active duty service members to be fit and healthy," Blackman

See **BIKE**
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UMUC Salutes Our Military Heroes

MONIQUE WARDRICK
Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies
Air Force Veteran

Monique Wardrick's personal approach eases stress for transitioning airmen.

Heroism takes many forms. For U.S. Air Force veteran Monique Wardrick, it came in the form of a small change with a big impact.

As a transportation entitlements counselor, Wardrick wanted to provide a superior level of service to transitioning and separating airmen whom she was charged with assisting as they moved their households to new locations. So, she worked with her superiors to develop an individualized approach that addressed the unique needs of each airman with tailored solutions.

Because of her "passion for people, not just the job," Wardrick was able to empower the servicemembers and families she served with information on all of their options and ease their anxiety during times of huge life changes.

UMUC salutes the members of our military who inspire us in their daily service. Who inspires you?

Share your story about a servicemember who made a positive impact on people's lives at [#militaryheroes](#).

Read our heroes' stories at umuc.edu/militaryheroes.



AT YOUR SERVICE SINCE 1947

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PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

"I've been wanting to bike to work more often," said Maureen Hood of WRNMMC's Radiology Department. She added Bike to Work Day on May 19 provided her with the opportunity to do so, and "it was fun to see all the other bikers out," she added.

BIKE

From
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continued. "If I bike 20 minutes here and 20 minutes home, it gives me 40 minutes of cardiovascular exercise every day."

"I've been wanting to bike to work more often," said Maureen Hood of WRNMMC's Radiology Department. She added Bike to Work Day provided her with the opportunity to do so, and "it's fun to see all the other

bikers out."

Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Darren David, a medical laboratory technician at Walter Reed Bethesda, also bikes to work every day. "Today is different because we got T-shirts," he said with a smile. In addition to the health benefits, David explained cycling helps the environment because less cars and trucks are "clogging the roads." He added for him, cycling actually gets him to work faster than taking a vehicle because he's able to avoid traffic stalls.

NSAB's Newest FLETC Graduates



PHOTO COURTESY BARRY BRADWELL

Kyle Furey, left, and Roman Davis graduated from the Uniformed Police Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center May 19. The program goes over basic law enforcement concepts new officers should understand to be employed in a federal law enforcement organization, according to the Training Center.



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5/26 6 pm **DC Improv Trip: Michael Blackson**
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5/27 8 am **King's Dominion Trip-**
Register for this trip in the Ticket Office, Bldg. 2. Open to All \$40, Liberty: Free*

6/3 9 am **National Air & Space Museum Trip**
Register for this trip in the Ticket Office, Bldg. 2. Open to All \$10, Liberty Price \$5*

6/9 11 am-4 pm **Bretton Woods Country Club Golf Outing**
18 holes, golf cart, post round meal, free future weekday round of golf. Register by 6/8: nsabgolfjune2017.eventbrite.com

6/9 5:30 pm **DC Improv Comedy Night: Aries Spears**
Register for this trip in the Ticket Office, Bldg. 2. Open to All \$20, Liberty Price \$10*

6/10 7 am **Virginia Beach Day Trip**
Register for this trip in the Ticket Office, Bldg. 2. Open to All \$10, Liberty Price \$5*

10 am **Color Me 5K** **MWR Sports Complex**
Register by 6/8: nsabcolorme5k2017.eventbrite.com
Registration includes food, *t-shirt, color packet, eye protection and headband.

6/17 6-9 pm **Daddy Daughter Dance**, Bldg. 17 Gymnasium
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5/27 8 am
FREE* King's Dominion Trip

6/2 9 am
FREE* Commissary Trip

6/3 9 am
\$5* National Air & Space
Museum Trip

6/7 5:30 pm
FREE* Bldg. 11 Patio
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6/9 5:30 pm
\$10* DC Improv: Aries
Spears

6/10 7 am
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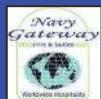
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Nurses Week: Walter Reed Bethesda Chaplains Bless Hands of Healing

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Command Communications

A Nurse's Prayer

By Teri Lynn Thompson

*Let me dedicate my life today
To care of those who come my way.
Let me touch each one with healing hands,
And the gentle art for which I stand.
And then tonight when the day is done,
Let me rest in peace if I've helped just one.*

"I anoint your hands in the name of the Father who created, loves and sustains you, the Son who redeems you, and the Holy Spirit who empowers you. May these hands bring comfort and healing to those they touch, to the honor and glory of God."

With similar blessings, Walter Reed Bethesda chaplains anointed the hands of nurses at the medical center during a ceremony May 8 in the hospital chapel.

The Blessing of the Hands during Nurses Week is an annual ceremony at the medical center. Many nurse groups throughout the world offer a Blessing of the Hands ceremony during Nurses Week, observed each year May 6 through May 12, during the week of Florence Nightingale's birthday.

Nightingale is considered the founder of modern nursing because of her commitment to faith and compassion in the delivery of care, as well as for her efforts in advancing training for nurses and advocating for better hospital administration," explained Navy Ensign Katarina Uebelhor, a nurse at Walter Reed Bethesda.

She added National Nurses Week was first celebrated in 1954, and is now observed annually at health-care facilities around the globe.

Army Chaplain (Capt.) Grant Gaskin said nurses are called upon to share in the ministry of



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Nurses at Walter Reed Bethesda light candles during the Nurses Week Blessing of the Hands ceremony in the hospital chapel May 8.

healing. "These men and women have committed their talents, skills and abilities to serve people...through wisdom, love, compassion, sensitivity and reassurance."

Guest speaker at the ceremony, Air Force Col. Kristin L. Carlson, stressed the importance of nurses taking care of themselves in order to take care of others. She added the American Nurses Association has declared 2017 the Year of the Healthy Nurses, emphasizing the need for nurses to have balance in their lives through proper nutrition, exercise and sleep. She added it's also important for all people, not just nurses, to have positive and welcoming attitudes for their overall well-being. "Smile... smile as much as you can, and every time you see someone, say, 'Good morning' or 'Hello,'" she said.

Carlson, chief of nursing services for the 779th Medical Group at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, said if Nightingale was alive today, she would probably be proud of how far the nursing profession has advanced. Carlson added

for nearly two decades, most recently in 2016, nursing has ranked as the No. 1 most trusted profession with the highest honesty and ethical standards among its professionals, according to a Gallup poll.

The Air Force colonel added Nightingale, who stayed healthy for most of her 90 years, would also be concerned with the health of today's nurses, citing high burn-out rates for the profession, as well as a consistent shortage nationally within the career.

Carlson added Nightingale was extremely dedicated to her profession and those she served, earning the nickname "The Lady with the Lamp" because she made rounds with a little lamp in her hand during the Crimean War. Uebelhor added Nightingale's lamp served as "a symbol of hope, strength and healing" to those she to whom she provided care.

The ensign and four Walter Reed Bethesda nurses, representing the Army, Navy, Air Force and Civilian Corps, then provided prayers for nurses before lighting candles, symbolic of the lamp which Nightingale carried with her during rounds, at the program.

"As we light our candles, let us be reminded to be the light and hope to all those we serve – our patients, their families, and especially to each other," Uebelhor said.

The nurses recited the Florence Nightingale Pledge as they lit their candles. The pledge states: "I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty, I will endeavor to aid the physician, in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

After the pledge, chaplains anointed the hands of the nurses to conclude the ceremony.

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PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

Auxiliary Security Forces (ASF) course graduates pose for a photo May 19 after an ASF graduation. ASF is comprised of service members who stand duty at Naval Support Activity Bethesda entry control points as a collateral duty.

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Combat Medic, Paralympian Brings Inspirational Story, Thanks to WRNMMC

By Bernard S. Little WRNMMC Command Communications

Army Sgt. Elizabeth Marks, a combat medic and gold-medal winning Paralympian, thanked nurses and other providers at Walter Reed Bethesda for the compassion and care they provide beneficiaries every day at the flagship military medical center. She spoke to members of the medical center's nursing team and students in the licensed practical nurse course on May 9 as part of WRB's National Nurses Week events.

During her talk, Marks asked those in attendance to briefly close their eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine someone or something very important in their lives to whom or for which they are appreciative. She did the exercise with them.

After a minute had passed and everyone opened their eyes, Marks shared with the group where her thoughts took her during the exercise. “[To] you guys,” she said. She explained how appreciative she is of her fellow service members, the care they provide, and to represent the United States in the Army uniform as well as the uniforms given to her to compete for her country as a world-classed athlete.

This wasn't Marks first time doing such an exercise.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Paralympian Army Sgt. Elizabeth Marks shares medals she earned during the 2016 Summer Games with students in the licensed practical nurse course at Walter Reed Bethesda following a presentation she gave before the class May 9 at the medical center.

The Arizona native joined the Army in 2008 and became a 68W health care specialist. While deployed in Iraq in 2010, she suffered devastating lower-limb injuries, and initially thought her military career could come to an end. She called her father, a former Marine and Vietnam veteran, who told her to write what was most important to her on a piece of paper. She wrote “FFD,” an acronym for “fit for duty.”

On July 3, 2012, following a grueling recovery which included multiple surgeries and physical therapy, Marks was deemed "FFD."

As part of her physical therapy, Marks took to the pool to strengthen her body, and it's in the pool where she began to excel after hours of training and a number of coaches and mentors.

Although Marks swims a variety of events, she considers her breaststroke her strongest. She is currently the No. 1 ranked 100-meter breaststroke paraswimmer in the world.

It was in 2012 Marks began swimming with the U.S. military's World Class Athlete Program, which permits service members to train in sports while still working for the military. She progressed to the point where she was able to travel to London for the 2014 Invictus Games, the first year for the international multi-sport competition created by Britain's Prince Harry in which wounded, injured or ill armed services personnel and veterans take part in a variety of sporting events.

During those Games, Marks contracted a severe respiratory infection, which forced doctors at Papworth Hospital to place her in a medically induced coma for one month. She missed competing in the Games, but her life was saved.

Marks recovered and returned to the pool an even stronger swimmer.

Games and four gold medals at the 2016 Invictus Games, one of which she gave back to Prince Harry after he awarded it to her, explaining she wanted him to give it to the providers at Papworth Hospital who saved her life. Her gesture made global news.

Citing her “courage in the face of adversity and her unwavering commitment to her country,” Marks was also honored with the Pat Tillman Award for Service at the 2016 ESPYS last summer. She was then named to the ESPN Women’s Impact25 Athletes and Influencers list, which highlights the top 25 women who made the greatest impact in sports and the societies in which they live.

Capping off last summer events, Marks then qualified for the 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, where she earned a gold in the 100-meter breaststroke and bronze in the 4x100-meter medley. Those medals she brought with her to show during her presentation at Walter Reed Bethesda.

Marks is currently in training for swimming competitions this summer, including the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto, Canada this fall, where she is favored to bring home more hardware to add to her medal collection.

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A collage of seven photographs illustrating the work of Wounded Warriors Family Support. The images show: a woman and a child; a woman cheering; a man welding; a group of people outdoors; a group in front of a plaque; and a yellow SUV.

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From
Page 4

There are some good people out there, and there are some not so good people. It is life rewarding. I think my main reason for being here is to tell others, "This is possible," he added.

Vicki Pitts

Walter Reed Bethesda performs an average of 25 transplants per year, according to Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Jason Hawksworth, transplant chief at WRNMMC. Vicki Pitts is one of the more recent beneficiaries to receive a kidney transplant at the medical center.

"Oct. 31, 2016, I got a call from my doctor and she said, 'You need to come in to see me,'" Pitts recalled. "I came into Internal Medicine and the doctor said, 'You need to go to another area, Nephrology.' I responded, 'I don't know what nephrology is.'"

In Nephrology, Pitts was told she would need dialysis or a transplant because her kidney was failing. She added the news was "shocking" because she didn't feel sick and maintained a very active lifestyle.

A former flight attendant and tour director who has traveled the world, Pitts said once she got the news she would need dialysis or a transplant, her lifestyle suddenly changed and it wasn't easy.

Walter Reed Bethesda providers kept a close eye on her while she waited for the transplant, adjusting her medication to try and stabilize her failing kidney. They started the process of mapping my veins for dialysis, but then another surprise happened — Pitts' daughter, Jennifer, stepped up to be her donor.

"I was on my way to Canada and my daughter called and said, 'Mom, I'm your match,'" Pitts recalled. "We all cried. It was such a blessing," said Pitts, whose husband is a retired Air Force officer.

Pitts said she would have never asked her daughter to be her donor. "I was thinking my sister would be my donor," she added. But her daughter was tested to see if she would be a match.

"My daughter said, 'Mom, of course it would be me. Her call was the happiest day of our lives. I'm 69 years of age, and the cut off [for the transplant] is 70. That was another blessing. All the miracles that have happened are for a reason," Pitts added.

A mere three weeks after her transplant, Pitts was assisting at the Walter Reed Bethesda Organ Transplant Fair, walking from table to table serving cake and passing out information about the importance of organ donation. She said she and her husband have been coming to Walter Reed for her care for nearly 40 years. He had open heart surgery here 16 years ago and was with her at the fair.

Pitts added she, along with her husband, travel from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to come to WRNMMC for care. She called the providers here "amazing," adding her kidney transplant was a team effort. "You have a dietitian, pharmacist, nephrologist, surgeon, laboratory staff and their teams. It's everybody, and you all work together. They are so nice."

Asked how she is doing now, Pitts said with a big smile, "Fabulous. I walked two miles six days [after the transplant]. I think the key is your attitude and the other thing is to exercise. You have to work that kidney." She added doctors continue to monitor her, but so far everything is going very well. "It's been wonderful," she added.

Debra Washington

Debra Washington, another kidney recipient at WRNMMC agrees that life is wonderful.

Washington is a familiar face around the medical center where she has served as a longtime volunteer. She began volunteering with the American Red Cross at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), where she had her first kidney transplant.

A South Carolina native, Washington was diagnosed with kidney disease in 1986 while still on active duty in the Army and serving in Germany. "I was sent to WRAMC where I had my first transplant," she explained. That kidney lasted 13 years before Washington

needed another transplant.

"I ended up coming over here for treatment," Washington continued. "For a long time they thought I wasn't going to get another transplant because of my antibodies, but they found one for me." Her second transplant was in September 2015 at WRNMMC.

Washington stressed the importance of organ donation. "It can affect anyone. You never imagine it could happen to you, just as I thought it couldn't happen to me," she said.

"I'm doing great," Washington said in response to how she is now doing.

Jordan, Pitts and Washington expressed appreciation to those who donated their organs, as well as their families, which have allowed the three to have a better quality of life. The organ recipients all said those decisions by others "to have a heart," have allowed them to be able to give back to others in various ways.

Hawksworth explained the goal of WRB's Organ Transplant Service is to help every patient in need of a life-saving kidney, "but we can't do that without the selfless act of living donors. It's an honor and a privilege to match a living organ donor with a military beneficiary — both heroes who have dedicated themselves to serving others."

For more information about organ donation at WRNMMC, call Nephrology Dialysis and the Organ Transplant Center at 301-295-4331.

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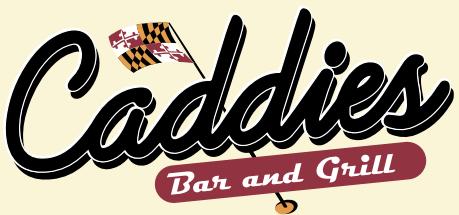
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